

Notes (X) ~~Thompson~~

Notes (X) ~~Thompson~~ but incomplete) on briefing
by Sir Robert Thompson to the Vietnam Special Studies
Group (Richardson, Helms, Packard, Kiering),
~~Thompson~~ 1 Dec 1969

1d It is likely that the enemy will launch
numerous small attacks in the future but
they will not be sustained. If he attempts
discrete sustained operations, then he can be
relatively easily defeated.

He will probably disperse his efforts on
three main targets (US casualties, ARVN (RF in ^{base}),
Pacification) and therefore not make a big dent
in any. On the other hand, if the NVA concentrated
on the ARVN, they could shake the ARVN confidence.

This next year will be one of great psychological
importance. The RVN would be badly shaken if their
military forces were rolled back.

c We should concentrate on getting some of the bad
provinces cleaned out during 1970. The worst
series are Long An in III Corps and Binh Thuan in
IV Corps. Binh Thuan province now appears to be doing fairly
well.

F. VCI. The VC have lost a large part of the recruiting base. The Chin Hoi rate is substantial. There are now significant RF & PF units in all areas. Although the VCI is still present in many respects, it has been displaced from significant portions of its normal operating area. However, it could return if the GVN loses its momentum.

3. If the enemy goes on with the protracted war through 1970 and into 1971, the GVN may think they have "room to play." They may support peace proposals which would not result in a just peace. The SVNese tend not to distinguish between differentiate between peace and a just peace. Pres. Thieu differentiates but not those like Ozer. The NCF could rally behind one of the peace groups and engage in legitimate subversion. If a peace candidate should get elected, Pres. Thieu would probably initiate a coup.

~~J. Thompson, to~~
~~1 Dec 69~~

~~VN Special Studies Group~~
~~(Pockwood, Helms, Richardson, Kiss.)~~

~~g. of the enemy~~

5. The situation in SVN may go back to what we saw in 1956 to 1958 with the NVA on the sidelines. If the GVN puts all of its efforts into the Rural Focus and provides only security and nothing else (teachers, doctors, econ. improvements, etc.) then the situation starts to stagnate and the villages/hamlets would be ripe for subversion again as the Communists

did in 1957-1958. This is the weakest point in the whole situation in SVN.

c. A ceasefire would be disastrous. It could take all the effort of the GVN to administer & police it, and would inhibit operations of military forces, thus causing a loss of momentum. Momentum is vital for at least the next year. A ceasefire at this time would have the following disadvantages:

(1) If entered into freely by the US, would give the appearance that the US is losing its resolve in SVN.

(2) North side would keep the guns — NVA, ARVN, & US.

(3) A c.f. would cause a loss of momentum and probably reversal of many of the gains already made.

4. The situation is

2. Summary:

2. The strategy presently being followed is proper.

3. Pacification is proper.

C. In 1970 consolidation is essential. MACV, CORDS and the GVN have already made great progress in pulling together. There are now good province chiefs in almost all of the provinces.

2. In spite of the progress being made there are still some weaknesses:

(1) Manpower: GVN must not concentrate manpower in the military to the exclusion of anything else.

(2) Pay: low pay for all (mil., police, etc.) causes individuals to seek funds from other sources and makes them vulnerable to graft, subversion, collusion with enemy.

~~Revised~~

Insert A

3. Sir R stated that, this being a psychological year, the key is confidence. We must get the Thir go through the 1970 elections; must show that the US is still committed, and so

(3) There is much wasted effort and a frustrated public as a result of French style bureaucratic processes.

Insert A Here

3. ... the US must have adequate combat forces to protect whatever support forces we leave in-country. The commander in SVN must have the authority to send US elements in as rescue forces if this becomes necessary. The US combat forces must be kept occupied doing something. They can't just sit in a backup role only. They must do something and this could be support of pacification. In addition to training the RF and PF, the CAP, MATT or other small units throughout the countryside must help to organize the villagers as well. A combination of the idea of CAP plus MATT is what we need. The villagers must also help in stopping enemy infiltration and support moving through this area.

Tolson

46 Mr. Helms asked if he felt that pacification was working out but is still rather fragile?

Sir R. replied that he did. ... commented that the "C" Scouts cover a wide range of conditions and therefore he was not really as comfortable about what they tell us as he was with the "A" and "B" Scouts. ✓

C. Dr. Kiss. asked if he believed enemy main force units cannot make a substantial effort against the inner Scouts (those in the highly populated areas)? R: if they are now the one day away from the enemy sanctuary or support base, the friendly forces can meet and defeat the the enemy MF units when they come to attack. This is what our forces would like to see the enemy try to do. Dr. K further asked if the enemy main force units had been completely decoupled from the guerrillas? R: this had not been accomplished in all areas. There are still some areas where

they can support each other, such as in the Delta, in certain border areas, and in Military Region 5.

d. Mr. Richardson asked what would happen to our momentum if we have a cease fire? Would it help the GVN in getting on with organizing the villages and hamlets? Mr. Packard commented that is the heart of a C.F., one of our problems would be a requirement for some way to stop refurbishing and replenishment of enemy forces in the enclaves. If this were allowed to go on unimpeded, it would give the enemy a great advantage. Sir R responded that if we stopped the momentum of pac. in the villages + hamlets and the enemy gets a respite, it would give him an unenvied opportunity to reestablish himself in questionable areas, such as the "C" "D" and "E" hamlets. At the present time he is being rocked back

on his heels and never has an opportunity for this respite. The present thrust erodes the enemy's position, but the minute you stop, he has a chance to rebuild his strength and start moving into questionable areas.

Mr. P commented there is now the threat of moving people back into the unoccupied land areas and getting them settled as security moves forward. This would stop under a c.f. and the VC would spread back into these areas. Sir R prophesied that a c.f. would result in a loss of confidence, a loss of resolution on the part of the US, and a "real mess." General McPherson added that our side would be the only one to observe a "c.f." Mr. P. stated that we are making considerable progress now and therefore it would be the worst time for us to consider a c.f. We should keep this progress moving. Dr. K commented that - the result of a c.f., there would also be the problem of the

VC impressing them will again on the
village and hamlet chiefs. How many of
would they have to associate to plant the
idea that these village and hamlet chiefs
need the protection & support of the VC?